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Chief Denies Refugee Had CIA Connection

PASSAIC — Police Chief John F. Campbell said today a man arrested with a carload of guns and ammunition over the weekend was not an employee of the Central Intelligence Agency.

"He had absolutely no connection whatsoever with the CIA. He knows nothing about it," the chief declared.

Campbell's announcement came after he had ordered a full investigation in the arrest of the man, identified as Gabriel Mentoda, a 32-year-old Cuban refugee of 305 40th St., Union City.

A report circulated by a wire service said Mentado had claimed he worked for the CIA and he was running arms into Cuba.

Mentado was picked up at about 6:30 p.m. Saturday after he allegedly threatened Mrs Sally Augustine, an employee of a snack bar at 25 State St.

Campbell said police uncovered in his car two rifles, a revolver, 220 rounds of ammunition, an Army canteen, a bullet-proof vest and a gun belt.

He was charged with carrying concealed weapons, Campbell added.

Detective Casimir Kuzicki, who questioned Mentado with Detective Michael Di Napoli, said Mentado happened to come to the Speer Village Housing Project Saturday and struck up a conversation with a man.

Kuzicki said the man offered to take Mentado to a woman in the project for $10, but he took off after pocketing the money.

Kuzicki added that Mentado then walked across the street to a snack bar. While walking, Mentado was seen to have taken out a pistol from his rear pants pocket and put it in the waistband of his trousers, the detective said.

Kuzicki reported Mentado ate two hot dogs at the bar and after he finished, he paid for it and then threatened Mrs. Augustine to "tell your friend to give my money back."

Kuzicki said Mentado rode around the block a few times, and someone in the snack bar called the police.

Mentado was stopped at Market and Passaic Streets by Patrolmen Harry Swan and Nathan Levit. Kuzicki said Mentado spoke very little English.

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